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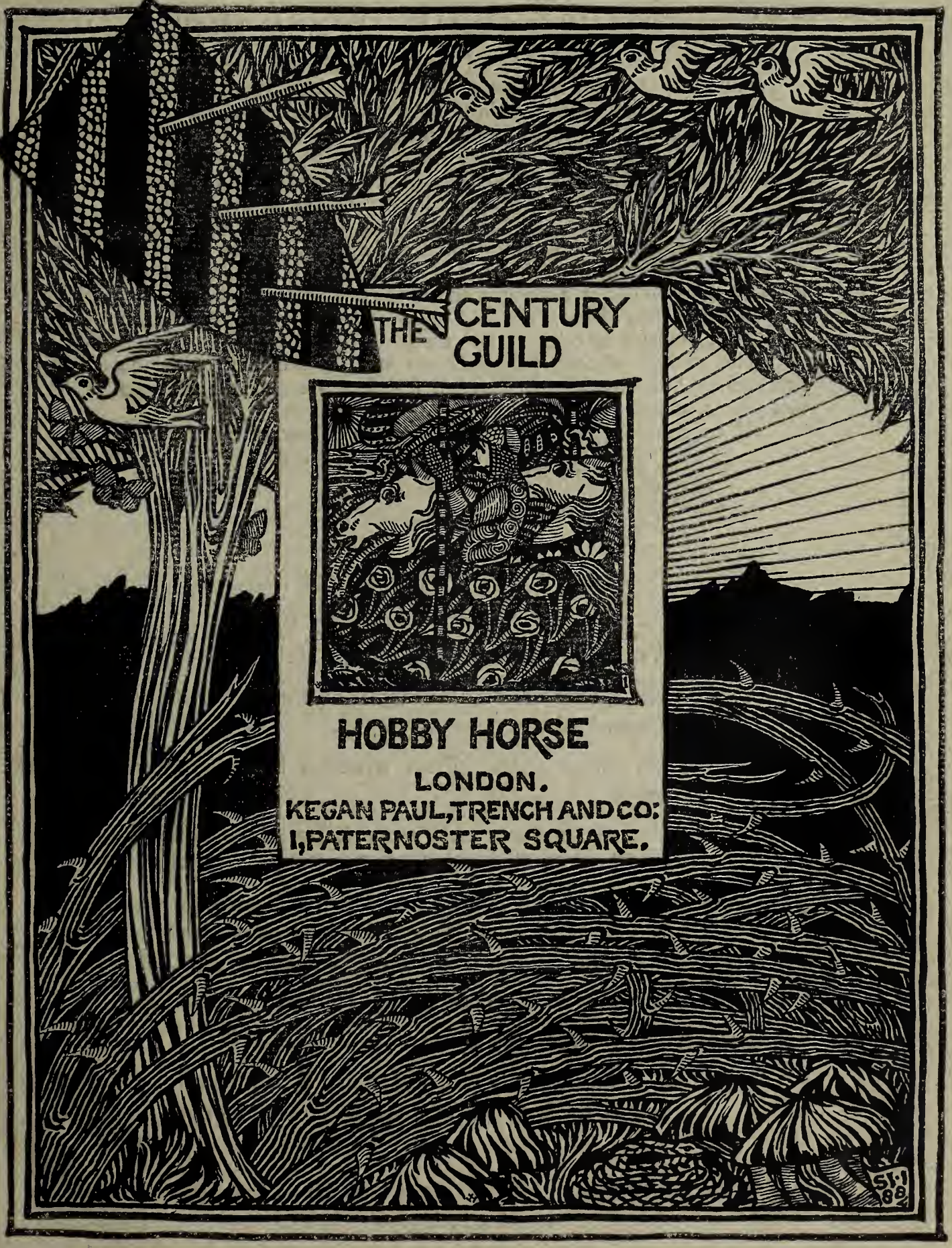

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TO T. G. WITH A COPY OF THE IMITATION OF CHRIST.

What the message Angels bring?
"Christ is born to-day, a King."
King forsooth! in cattle byre,
All the ways trod down to mire,
Where the crown and where the throne?
This, the King that Angels own?

Yes: since parents first were glad
At the birth of lass or lad,
King nor Kaiser never sees
Fairer throne than mother's knees,
And of all Creation's ring
Man, because man, is the King.

What the message Angels gave
When the women sought the grave?
"Seek him not, beyond the prison
To the Father Christ has risen."
Risen! what is Heaven, where?
On the earth, or in the air?

Tuck of trumpet, pulse of drum
Sound when earthly monarchs come;
All the world may see their place;
But the risen Lord of Grace
Makes a heaven, and dwells apart,
Throned in every humble heart.

Once on mother's knees a Queen
Thou, an infant, throned hast been,
Queen because of human blood,
Kin to Christ who died on Rood;
Live a Queen o'er hearts of men
Blessing those who bless again.

Imitate the Christ, who came
Tender infant free from blame ;
Imitate the Christ, who trod
Stony paths for love of God ;
Imitate the Christ, and win
Peace on earth and heaven within.

C. KEGAN PAUL.

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MATTHEW ARNOLD; HIS PRACTICE, TEACHING, AND EXAMPLE: AN ESSAY ON CRITICISM.

Nullum fere scribendi genus non tetigit,
Nullum, quod tetigit, non ornavit.

Matthew Arnold has suddenly gone away from us; and his departure is making us realise, with bitter sorrow, all that we have lost. If it were possible in a single phrase to define the work of a great author, the phrase which I have chosen, it is part of Goldsmith's epitaph, might define the work of Matthew Arnold. "He laboured in almost every field of literature, and everything he handled became fascinating and beautiful." Definitions, however, cannot be more than weak efforts thrown out towards the truth, they are bound to fall short, to press unduly upon a single aspect of it, to define it partially; though, in this case, the first half of Dr. Johnson's epigram is, perhaps, entirely true. Matthew Arnold was a labourer "in almost every field of literature;" it is this width of range, this universality of his, which gives him an unique position among contemporary men of letters. He "saw life steadily, and saw it whole."

But though his touch always has the gifts of beauty and fascination, he can endue things with even higher qualities than fascination and beauty. "Poetry," he says himself, "interprets by expressing with magical felicity the physiognomy and movement of the outer world, and it interprets by expressing, with inspired conviction, the ideas and laws of the inward world of man's moral and spiritual nature." It interprets by having "natural magic" and "moral profundity." If Matthew Arnold's poetry be looked at as a whole, it will not, I think, be found wanting in "moral profundity;"

"Tears
Are in his eyes, and in his ears
The murmur of a thousand years."

his verse is penetrated with a grave and serious morality. And, because he is haunted by "the something that infects the world," his verse, when he is describing the outward

aspect of Nature, is "drenched," as he would say, "with natural magic:"—

"Not by those hoary Indian hills,
Not by this gracious Midland sea
Whose floor to-night sweet moonshine fills,
Should our graves be.

"So sang I; but the midnight breeze,
Down to the brimm'd, moon-charmed main,
Comes softly through the olive trees
And checks my strain."

But, in addition to the quality of "natural magic," to the expression of the beauty and fascination of the outer world, there is in his verse an ever present sense of the vastness and austerity of Nature:—

"Thin, thin the pleasant human noises grow,
And faint the city gleams;
Rare the lone pastoral huts—marvel not thou!
The solemn peaks but to the stars are known,
But to the stars and the cold lunar beams;
Alone the sun arises, and alone
Spring the great streams."

It is this sense of austerity and vastness which gives him his finest inspiration; and I should point to his expression of that sense, and to his application of it to "the ideas and laws of man's moral and spiritual nature," if I were asked to name his most individual and distinguishing quality. The following verse is an example of what I mean, and it will serve to mark the difference between Matthew Arnold and Wordsworth in their treatment of Nature:—

"They
Which touch thee are unmating things—
Ocean and clouds and night and day;
Lorn autumns and triumphant springs."

Wordsworth's message to us from Nature, is that it is a sympathetic, a companionable thing; he says, for instance, in his "Tables Turned":—

"Books! 'tis a dull and endless strife:
Come, hear the woodland Linnet,
How sweet his music! on my life,
There's more of wisdom in it.

"And hark! how blithe the Throstle sings!
He, too, is no mean preacher:
Come forth into the light of things,
Let Nature be your teacher.

"She has a world of ready wealth,
Our minds and hearts to bless—
Spontaneous wisdom breathed by health,
Truth breathed by cheerfulness.

"One impulse from a vernal wood
May teach you more of man,
Of moral evil and of good,
Than all the sages can."

And this impression of the joy that is to be found in Nature, of her living sympathy and companionship, is almost everywhere present in Wordsworth, it is the prevailing impression that he leaves with us.

The prevailing impression which we get from Matthew Arnold, on the other hand, is that Nature is a calming thing; calming from its austerity, from its obedience to inevitable law, from its infinite patience and its "toil unsever'd from tranquility."

"And a look of passionate desire
O'er the sea and to the stars I send:
'Ye who from my childhood up have calm'd me,
Calm me, ah, compose me to the end!

"'Ah, once more,' I cried, 'ye stars, ye waters,
On my heart your mighty charm renew;
Still, still let me, as I gaze upon you,
Feel my soul becoming vast like you!'

"From the intense, clear, star-sown vault of heaven,
Over the lit sea's unquiet way,
In the rustling night-air came the answer:
'Would'st thou be *as these are?* Live *as they.*

"'Unaffrighted by the silence round them,
Undistracted by the sights they see,
These demand not that the things without them
Yield them love, amusement, sympathy.

"'And with joy the stars perform their shining,
And the sea its long moon-silver'd roll;
For self-poised they live, nor pine with noting
All the fever of some differing soul.

"'*Bounded by themselves, and unregardful*
In what state God's other works may be,
In their own tasks all their powers pouring,
These attain the mighty life you see.'"

In dealing with Nature, Matthew Arnold has, therefore, a message, an inspiration, of his own; up to a certain point he follows Wordsworth, and then he goes beyond him, and gives us something which Wordsworth has not given. I do not say something greater than Wordsworth has given, I only wish to point out that it is something different. Because one of the most essential, though most neglected, functions of true criticism, is to seek out these finer shades of difference; to extract the "peculiar sensation, the peculiar quality of pleasure which a man's work excites in us." And the very fineness of the sense which can thus discriminate, will make its possessor delight in these revelations of distinct personality, and dwell in them; but it will, at the same time, restrain him from the common and lamentable habit of pointing to a distinction for the sole purpose of establishing a vulgar rivalry.

For there is a school of criticism which is always occupied in "placing the poets;" or in "putting writers into the main literary current," whatever that may mean. The critics who usually employ these and similar phrases, have little to say about any individual poet, or about poetry in the concrete; their remarks, in consequence, are so vague and comprehensive that they may be applied with equal fitness to every poet, and to almost every writer. This, no doubt, is a wonderful triumph of ingenuity, but still it has its disadvantages; the disadvantage for the critic, is that he is apt to lose sight of the fine distinctions between things, he is a little wanting in discernment; the disadvantage for the reader, is that he gains nothing definite, his notions are not cleared. The disadvantage for the poet, whom the critic wishes to explain and the reader to study, is that he is not revealed; he is certainly "put into the literary current," but he is overwhelmed in the flood of verbiage which flows there. And when a writer talks of "placing the poets" there is only one thing to be done, that is to place his writing at once in the waste-paper basket; the phrase is offensive, the thing is impossible, the desire for it is absurd. It is most of all

absurd, offensive, and impossible, in the case of a modern or a living poet; for the history of literature tells us very plainly that no age has ever been able to estimate its poets with absolute truth and insight. An age can, indeed, feel its own poets in a more penetrating way than an alien time can feel them; but it cannot give so true a verdict about them. A poet may commend himself to his own age by some touch of sentiment or style which beguiles that age to over-estimate enormously his true poetical quality. He may, in like manner, be underrated as a poet, not for any defect in poetry, but because he does not appeal in any special way to the prevailing sentiment of his time. And Posterity, which will judge with a cool impartiality far removed from the passing contemporary sentiment, may entirely reverse, and quite justly reverse, the contemporary decision. It is only when an age has passed away that its real function, and its true place, can be discerned; and until that period arrives, the literature which reflects it cannot be finally judged. It is, therefore, premature to form any opinion about Matthew Arnold's relative position among his contemporaries. And we, who are touched ourselves by the same emotions and desires which move the poets of our time, are as little able to realize the position they will finally take in the classical poetry of England; we cannot settle where they may individually rank in that list; we cannot even tell, with infallible certainty, which of them will be found worthy to rank in it at all.

" The epoch ends, the world is still.
The age has talk'd and work'd its fill—
The famous orators have shone,
The famous poets sung and gone,
The famous men of war have fought,
The famous speculators thought,
The famous players, sculptors, wrought,
The famous painters filled their wall,
The famous critics judged it all.
The combatants are parted now—
Uphung the spear, unbent the bow,
The puissant crown'd, the weak laid low.
And in the after-silence sweet,
Now strifes are hush'd, our ears doth meet,
Ascending pure, the bell-like fame
Of this or that down-trodden name,—

Delicate spirits push'd away
In the hot press of the noon-day; —
And o'er the plain, where the dead age
Did its now silent warfare wage—
O'er that wide plain, now wrapt in gloom,
Where many a splendour finds its tomb,
Many spent fames, and fallen mights—
The one or two immortal lights
Rise slowly up into the sky
To shine there everlastingly."

But, it may be urged, if the sphere of criticism is thus limited, what do you leave the critic to work upon when he tries to form a judgment about contemporary poets; are a poet's contemporaries alone to have no definite opinion about his work? There was once a prudent French critic who was incessantly haunted by "La peur d'être dupe;" he was in continual dread lest he should make a fool of himself, this abiding terror controlled all his utterances. Now there is nothing in which a man can so easily make a fool of himself as in passing hasty and sweeping judgments upon his contemporaries. Of course we can all pass judgment upon them, and we all like doing it immensely; though such judgments can only be useful to us if they avoid all heated, partizan feeling, and if we clearly recognize how limited and tentative they must be, from the very nature of the case. But I think, decidedly, it would be better to form no judgments at all, than to express, dogmatically and with no sense of hesitation, judgments which have every chance of proving false; like the judgments, effusive and exaggerated or stinted and inadequate, which are poured out at the death of every man of letters, almost before he is cold, by the newspaper critics and reviewers. Never to think at all, would be better than to think like them; for they think and write with no healthy dread before their eyes, with no controlling sense of fear, and they have to endure the penalty of being wholly unrestrained:—

"*Misericordia e Giustizia gli sdegna;*
Non ragionam di lor, ma guarda e passa."

The serious critic, however, although he sternly limits himself in the directions I have named, and guards against every temptation to form a relative judgment, is left, after all, with

sufficient matter upon which to exercise his intelligence. There are three things which he can profitably discuss; he can discuss the poet's substance or matter; he can discuss his manner or style; and he can record the impression which he makes upon a contemporary reader. The latter judgment, when it is given honestly and with any real insight, will always be a valuable and most interesting legacy to future historians of literature; most interesting and valuable, perhaps, when the contemporary view differs widely from the final verdict; most gratifying to the shade of the critic, and best witness to his sagacity, when it differs little from the ultimate judgment of posterity.

Before a critic is able profitably to discuss the substance or style of a poet, he must, in these days of ours, avoid two faults which vitiate a great deal of our criticism. He must avoid basing his judgment upon fragments and scattered passages; he must be still more careful that he does not choose these fragments because they are examples of what he thinks fine descriptions of natural scenery. "Descriptive poetry," says Mark Pattison, "is in fact a contradiction in terms. A landscape can be represented to the eye by imitative colours laid on a flat surface. But it cannot be presented in words which, being necessarily successive, cannot render juxtaposition in space. To exhibit in space is the privilege of the arts of design. Poetry, whose instrument is language, involves succession in time, and can only present that which comes to pass under one or other of its two forms, action or passion." Yet there are critics now who will hunt through a poet for descriptions of scenery which appeal to their individual sentiment; they will isolate these descriptions, and wrench them from their context; they will define them, perhaps, as "beautiful cameos of description," and then they will proceed to judge the poet's work by their estimate of these alone. Matthew Arnold himself shall expose this popular delusion, this widespread fallacy. Speaking of the "beautiful cameo" theory, of the insanity of judging a poem, or any work of art, by its scattered fragments, he says: "A modern critic would have assured him (Menander) that the merit of his piece depended on the brilliant things which arose under his pen as he went along. We have poems which seem to exist merely for the sake of single lines and

passages ; not for the sake of producing any total impression. We have critics who seem to direct their attention merely to detached expressions, to the language about the action, not the action itself. I verily think that the majority of them do not in their hearts believe that there is such a thing as a total impression to be derived from a poem at all, or to be demanded from a poet ; they think the term a commonplace of metaphysical criticism. They will permit the poet to select any action he pleases, and to suffer that action to go as it will, provided he gratifies them with occasional bursts of fine writing, and with a shower of isolated thoughts and images. That is, they permit him to leave their poetical sense ungratified, provided he gratifies their rhetorical sense and their curiosity." A poem, then, if we are to have a satisfactory judgment of it, must be regarded as a whole. It would be an example of unintelligent criticism, for instance, to select a passage from Matthew Arnold's "Tristram and Iseult," a passage from Lord Tennyson's "Merlin and Vivien," and a passage from Mr. Swinburne's "Tristram in Lyonesse," and then to judge these poems from a mere comparison of three isolated quotations ; such a judgment would probably be misleading, and would certainly be worthless. And judgments formed on this method are more than ever worthless when they are based upon descriptive selections, on "beautiful cameos of description." For, though it may seem a paradox at first sight, a description, which is attractive and striking in itself, may in its context be an artistic and poetic blemish. The use of description in literature is a subtle and delicate thing, and the narrow limits of the writer's art are easily exceeded. A modern writer has every temptation to exceed them ; his own sentiment may incline him that way, and the public taste is quite certain to encourage him. Perhaps one of the chief benefits which a modern gains from a constant reading of Dante and Homer, is to impress upon himself the severe way in which they avoid all direct and deliberate "word-painting," all elaborate description ; they recognize most perfectly the limitations of their art, and they are rewarded by making their scenes more vivid, their personages more distinct, than most other poets. Matthew Arnold is not a Dante or an Homer, in his matter he challenges no comparison with them ; but in his manner,

in his restrained severity of diction, he approaches the effect of the ancients, his work perpetually recalls their style.

Now when we have come to some understanding with ourselves as to whose manner precisely a certain poet recalls us, we have gone a long way towards realizing that poet's value. Matthew Arnold says: "there can be no more useful help for discovering what poetry belongs to the class of the truly excellent, and can therefore do us most good, than to have always in one's mind lines and expressions of the great masters, and to apply them as a touchstone to other poetry. Of course we are not to require this other poetry to resemble them; it may be very dissimilar. But if we have any tact we shall find them, when we have lodged them well in our minds, an infallible touchstone for detecting the presence or the absence of high poetic quality in all other poetry which we may place beside them. Short passages, even single lines, will serve our turn quite sufficiently. Take these two lines from Homer, the poet's comment on Helen's mention of her brothers :—

'Ὣς φάτο· τοὺς δ' ἤδη κατέχεν φυσίζοος αἶα
ἐν Λακεδαίμονι αὖθι, φίλῃ ἐν πατρίδι γαίῃ.'

'So said she; they long since in Earth's soft arms were reposing,
There in their own dear land, their fatherland, Lacedæmon.'

Take that incomparable line and a half of Dante, Ugolino's tremendous words :—

'Io non piangeva; si dentro impietrai:
Piangevan elli.'

'I wailed not, so of stone I grew within;
They wailed.'

take the lovely words of Beatrice to Virgil :—

'Io son fatta da Dio, sua mercè, tale,
Che la vostra miseria non mi tange,
Nè fiamma d'esto incendio non m'assale.'

'I am made such by God, in his grace, that your misery does not touch me: nor the flame of this burning assail me.'

Take of Shakespeare a line or two of Henry the Fourth's expostulation with sleep :—

'Wilt thou upon the high and giddy mast
Seal up the ship-boy's eyes, and rock his brains
In cradle of the rude imperious surge?'

Take of Milton that Miltonic passage :—

'Darken'd so, yet shone
Above them all the arch-angel; but his face
Deep scars of thunder had intrench'd, and care
Sat on his faded cheek.'

add two such lines as:—

'And courage never to submit or yield
And what is else not to be overcome.'

and finish with the exquisite close to the loss of Proserpine, the loss

'Which cost Ceres all that pain
To seek her through the world.'

These few lines, if we have tact and can use them, are enough even of themselves to keep clear and sound our judgments about poetry, to save us from fallacious estimates of it, to conduct us to a real estimate.

"The specimens I have quoted differ widely from one another, but they have in common this: the possession of the very highest poetical quality. If we are thoroughly penetrated by their power, we shall find that we have acquired a sense enabling us, whatever poetry may be laid before us, to feel the degree in which a high poetical quality is present or wanting there. Critics give themselves great labour to draw out what in the abstract constitutes the characters of a high quality of poetry. It is much better simply to have recourse to concrete examples; to take specimens of poetry of the high, the very highest quality, and to say: the characters of a high quality of poetry are what is expressed *there*. They are far better recognized by being felt in the verse of the master, than by being perused in the prose of the critic. Nevertheless, if we are urgently pressed to give some critical account of them, we may safely, perhaps, venture on laying down, not indeed how and why the characters arise, but where and in what they arise. They are in the matter and substance of the poetry, and they are in its manner and

style. Both of these, the substance and matter on the one hand, the style and manner on the other, have a mark, an accent, of high beauty, worth, and power. But if we are asked to define this mark and accent in the abstract, our answer must be: No, for we should be thereby darkening the question, not clearing it. The mark and accent are as given by the substance and matter of that poetry, and of all other poetry which is akin to it in quality."

It may seem at first sight, perhaps, that all this contradicts what has been said about judging a poem as a whole, and about not judging it from descriptive passages. But these tests or touchstones of Matthew Arnold's differ entirely from descriptive passages, because they are of the very essence of the poetry; they are not fragments which can be detached or inserted without violating the artistic unity of the poem, without, therefore, altering its nature, and for this reason they are satisfactory tests of its quality and style. And the highest use of these tests does not consist, it seems to me, in choosing lines however excellent, taken from poets however famous, and applying them to chance lines and passages of the author whom we desire to estimate. Their highest value can only arise from our previous knowledge of the poets from whom we choose them; and our application of them should not be restricted to isolated lines and passages, here and there. We must rather bear them in mind constantly as we go along; because they will keep the great masters always before us, and oblige us to judge the verse we are reading by the standard of their poetry.

The critic, I said, could profitably discuss the manner or style of a poet. Now style is one of the most baffling things in the world to define, or to explain; there is only one thing more baffling, and that is to attain it. But style can be profoundly felt by those who have the instinct for it; and there can be no better test of style than the one Matthew Arnold gives. And if his own poetry is read with these test passages constantly in view, it will be found, I think, to recall the style and manner of the great masters. Several of the passages I have already quoted from him seem, to me, to recall that style and manner; but it is possible to choose lines which recall them even more vividly. Let us choose, as an example, this, from "Sohrab and Rustum":—

"*But Sohrab answer'd him in wrath: for now*
The anguish of the deep-fix'd spear grew fierce,
And he desired to draw forth the steel,
And let his blood flow free, and so to die—
But first he would convince his stubborn foe;
And, rising sternly on one arm, he said:—
'Man, who art thou who dost deny my words?
Truth sits upon the lips of dying men,
And falsehood, while I lived, was far from mine."

or this, from "Tristram and Iseult":—

"*The spirit of the woods was in her face;*
She look'd so witching fair."

or this, from "Urania":—

"*His eyes be like the starry lights—*
His voice like sounds of summer nights—
In all his lovely mien let pierce
The magic of the universe!"

or this, from "Isolation":—

"*Yes! in the sea of life enisled,*
With echoing straits between us thrown,
Dotting the shoreless watery wild,
We mortal millions live alone."

or this, from the "Grande Chartreuse":—

"*Our fathers water'd with their tears*
This sea of time whereon we sail;
Their voices were in all men's ears
Who passed within their puissant hail.
Still the same ocean round us raves,
But we stand mute, and watch the waves."

or this from "Dover Beach":—

"*The sea of faith*
Was once, too, at the full, and round earth's shore
Lay like the folds of a bright girdle furl'd.
But now I only hear
Its melancholy, long, withdrawing roar,
Retreating, to the breath
Of the night-wind, down the vast edges drear
And naked shingles of the world."

It is more satisfactory to take a few examples and confront them with test passages from the great masters, than to assert that Matthew Arnold's poetry has various abstract qualities of style; such as "restraint," "severity," "directness," "simplicity." We can feel his style in these examples, we have our experience of the style of the great masters, and we can make our own comparison between their style and his. The comparison will not, however, be fully satisfactory, we shall not realize all the value of Matthew Arnold's style, until we have applied the test passages to other modern poets. We might apply them to Mr. Browning, for instance, as well as to Matthew Arnold; and then we should learn that there is more than one way of resembling the great masters. We may apply them, also, to Lord Tennyson, and then we shall realize how subtle, and almost imperceptible, the resemblance can sometimes be. And if we apply them, finally, to Mr. Lewis Morris, we shall find how provoking critical rules are, and how, even though our intentions are scrupulously innocent, they may entangle us in the most distressing paradoxes; because in this case we shall be shown that a writer may have an enormous reputation without resembling the great masters of poetry at all. I have already deprecated anything like passionate and partizan comparisons between contemporary poets; comparisons which are too absolute, which imagine they can be final; but a comparison of this indirect and impersonal nature may be thoroughly profitable to a reader of modern poetry. It will help him to apply a common standard to the work of our contemporary poets, to regard their work from a fixed and definite point of view; it will restrain him from passionate and partial judgments. It is the only method which will enable him to overcome, or at any rate to check, his personal feelings, his private sympathies or tastes, and his individual caprice.

And if we pass from a poet's manner or style to his substance or matter, I think again that a sounder judgment can be obtained by an indirect method of examination, by applying some fixed and classical standard to his poems; but, if we can get it, a poetical standard. It would be easy, and in accordance with the ordinary practice, to take a certain number of Matthew Arnold's poems and declare that they

have this or that aim and purpose; that they teach this lesson, or preach that doctrine. But this mode of judgment is arbitrary, unartistic, and exceedingly deceptive; "wide is the range of words! words may make this way or that way," and if a wordy battle arises who is to decide which critic really understands the poet's lesson, or doctrine, or purpose? And even though one of them should guess right, he has, surely, not done a fine thing because he has shown how to translate a poem into a sermon; that cannot be the right way to judge poetry. Voltaire says of a preacher, of course only in a romance: "Il divisa en plusieurs parties ce qui n'avait pas besoin d'être divisé; il prouva méthodiquement tout ce qui était clair; il enseigna tout ce qu'on savait. Il se passionna froidement, et sortit suant et hors d'haleine. Toute l'assemblée alors se réveilla, et crut avoir assisté à une instruction. Voilà un homme qui a fait de son mieux pour ennuyer deux ou trois cents de ces concitoyens!" The mutilation, the laborious proving of what is clear, the dismal teaching of what a single flash of right instinct, and that only, can reveal, are all familiar to the readers of sermonising critics, to the audiences of academical professors. These critics are less offensive, perhaps, than the senseless and unscholarly writers who drown the poets, and display their own ignorance in a flood of verbiage; but they are far more tedious, and equally unprofitable. Matthew Arnold will again show us a better way of judging poetry. "We should conceive of poetry worthily," he says, "and more highly than it has been the custom to conceive of it. We should conceive of it as capable of higher uses, and called to higher destinies, than those which in general men have assigned to it hitherto. More and more mankind will discover that we have to turn to poetry to interpret life for us, to console us, to sustain us. Without poetry, our science will appear incomplete; and most of what now passes with us for religion and philosophy will be replaced by poetry. Science, I say, will appear incomplete without it. For finely and truly does Wordsworth call poetry 'the impassioned expression of what is the countenance of all science;' and what is a countenance without its expression? Again, Wordsworth finely and truly calls poetry 'the breath and finer spirit of all knowledge:' our

religion, parading evidences such as those on which the popular mind relies now; our philosophy, pluming itself on its reasonings about causations and finite and infinite being; what are they but the shadows and dreams and false shows of knowledge? The day will come when we shall wonder at ourselves for having trusted to them, for having taken them seriously; and the more we perceive their hollowness, the more we shall prize 'the breath and finer spirit of knowledge' offered to us by poetry.

"But if we conceive thus highly of the destinies of poetry, we must also set our standard for poetry high, since poetry, to be capable of fulfilling such high destinies, must be poetry of a high order of excellence. We must accustom ourselves to a high standard and to a strict judgment. Sainte-Beuve relates that Napoleon one day said, when somebody was spoken of in his presence as a charlatan: 'Charlatan as much as you please; but where is there *not* charlatanism?' 'Yes,' answers Sainte-Beuve, 'in politics, in the art of governing mankind, that is perhaps true. But in the order of thought, in art, the glory, the eternal honour is that charlatanism shall find no entrance; herein lies the inviolableness of that noble portion of man's being.' It is admirably said, and let us hold fast to it. In poetry, which is thought and art in one, it is the glory, the eternal honour, that charlatanism shall find no entrance; that this noble sphere be kept inviolate and inviolable. Charlatanism is for confusing or obliterating the distinctions between excellent and inferior, sound and unsound or only half-sound, true and untrue or only half-true. It is charlatanism, conscious or unconscious, when we obliterate these. And in poetry, more than anywhere else, it is unpermissible to confuse or obliterate them. For in poetry the distinction between excellent and inferior, sound and unsound or only half-sound, true and untrue or only half-true, is of paramount importance. It is of paramount importance because of the high destinies of poetry. The best poetry is what we want; the best poetry will be found to have a power of forming, sustaining, and delighting us, as nothing else can. Constantly, in reading poetry, a sense for the best, the really excellent, and of the strength and joy to be drawn from it, should be present in our minds and should govern our estimate of what we read."

The function of the best poetry is "to interpret life for us, to console us, to sustain us;" here, at any rate a definite aim is placed before a serious reader of poetry, he is told what to look for when he is seeking good poetry. We can all understand the meaning of consolation and support; we know quite well when we meet with a thing which "forms, delights, and sustains us." It is true that we may fancy, now and then, we are "delighted" and "consoled" by poetry with which we ought not to be pleased at all; we may "form" ourselves on models which are deplorably vicious; but for that there is no external remedy, we must gain our own experience, and grow into it. "The way to perfection is through a series of disgusts," as Mr. Pater so admirably expresses it; and if we once set our face earnestly towards perfection, we shall soon meet with the disgusts, and marvel not a little that we ever admired them. As the only satisfactory method, when we wish to judge of a poet's manner, is to confront him with the great masters of style; so, in trying to form a judgment about his matter, it is equally indispensible to try and give the reader a test which he can feel and experience. There can be no absolutely satisfying test except to read the poet's works, with a definite standard in mind by which to compare them. "Who is able to infuse into me," Cardinal Newman asks, "or how shall I imbibe, a sense of the pecularities of the style of Cicero or Virgil, if I have not read their writings?" No one can infuse into a reader adequate ideas about an author whom that reader has not read; although there is a fashionable school of criticism which seems to imagine it can do this, and it tries to do it in the strangest way. It would be in the manner of that school to describe Matthew Arnold as an arum-lily, Mr. Browning as a cactus in flower, and Lord Tennyson as a sweet-pea; we all know the kind of discourse that would follow, it would not be about botany exactly, or about poetry exactly, but it would touch upon every subject that lies between the two. Though we should be fortunate if the comparison were made between things of the same kind, it is more usually made between things which are not comparable with one another; the Parthenon, Wagner's music, mare's-nests, rainbows, the Crusades, and so on. All this may be very effective, it is often very elegant and

pretty; but it is more adapted to reveal the ingenuity of the critic, than the work of the poet whom it is his business to explain. "No description," says Cardinal Newman once more, "however complete, could convey to my mind an exact likeness of a tune, or an harmony, which I have never heard; and still less of a scent which I have never smelt; and if I said that Mozart's melodies were as a summer sky or as the breath of Zephyr, I should be better understood by those who knew Mozart than by those who did not." I would go still further than Cardinal Newman, because I think that no description however complete could impress upon another's mind the exact likeness of a scent or an harmony, even though he were familiar with the sound or smell described; and in the same way no description, no comparison, even when the images are sane, apposite, and comparable with one another, can adequately express, either to ourselves or to our readers, what we feel about a poet. If I were to compare a poet to a bird, a shell, or a star, my reader would get a very definite notion, but not of the poet; the definite notion conveyed to him would be, that my theory of criticism was unsound, and my practice insane. But if I say that Mathew Arnold in his poetry seems, to me, "to interpret life for us, to console us, to sustain us," and this in an eminent degree, those who have read him can test my opinion by their own experience; and those who have not read him will, at least, understand the kind of impression he makes upon me, and if they are familiar with poetry at all, they will be able to form some idea of Matthew Arnold's poetry; they will know to what sphere of poetry it belongs, with what sort of poetry it should be classed, with what order of poets he should be compared.

I said there were three things which the critic of a modern poet could profitably discuss; his manner or style, his matter or substance, and the impression which he makes upon a contemporary reader. We have discussed two of them, and at some length; because, in Cardinal Newman's words again, "when we assert, we do not argue." To assert, and to be believed without a shadow of additional proof is the inalienable prerogative of a theologian. Not to assert, not even to argue, but to try and convince persuasively is the business of a critic; and so, with a dread of bare asser-

tion, and with a dislike of argument, I have endeavoured, in this indirect way, to ascertain the truth about the matter and manner of the poet we are considering. And at last, perhaps, without incurring the charge of asserting too dogmatically, I may say what I feel about Matthew Arnold. In his style and manner he seems, to me, to recall the great masters; and this in a striking, and an abiding way. He recalls them in a striking way, because to recall them at all is a rare gift, but to recall them naturally and with no strained sense or jarring note of imitation, is a gift so exceedingly rare, that it is almost enough in itself to place a writer among the great masters, to proclaim that he is one of them. To recall them at all is a rare gift, though not an unique gift, a few other modern poets recall them too; but with them, with everyone of them, it is the exception when they resemble the great masters. They have their own styles, which abide with them; it is only now and then, by a flash of genius, that they break through their own styles and attain the one immortal style. Just the contrary of this, is true with Matthew Arnold; it is his own, usual, most natural style which recalls the great masters, and only when he does not write like himself does he cease to resemble them. It is Mr. Swinburne who defines Matthew Arnold as "the most efficient, the surest-footed poet of our time, the most to be relied on," who says that "what he does he is safest to do well," who asserts that "more than any other he unites personality and perfection," and that everywhere in his poetry "is the one ruling and royal quality of classic work, an assured and equal excellence of touch." I only follow Mr. Swinburne, therefore, when I repeat that Matthew Arnold resembles the great masters most, when he is most like himself; he is most classical when he is most personal. If we consider the whole amount of his work, he seldom falls below himself; for "he is the surest-footed poet of our time." And, to return to prose, that is why I think Matthew Arnold resembles the great masters in an abiding way.

It is more difficult to speak of a poet's matter and substance than of his style and manner. From the nature of his work, Matthew Arnold is to be classed among the poets who "interpret life for us, who console and sustain us;" but

as to the degree in which he communicates interpretation, consolation, and support, there may be a thousand opinions. So much will depend for each reader, upon the stage of his own development when he first meets with a poet, and undergoes his influence; so much, again, will depend upon each reader's temperament. A great deal will depend, as well, upon our varying moods; at one time a certain poet will be everything to us, at another time he can give us nothing we want, he will be cold, valueless, and silent. There are, however, a few poets who interpret life upon so many sides that they can always give us something we want, poets of wide range like Shakespeare, or Victor Hugo, or Mr. Browning; and there is Dante, who gives us a "Vita Nuova" as well as a "Divina Commedia." Poets of this order can appeal to every temperament, satisfy every mood, help us at every step; they are for ever and ever, they speak to time and to eternity. We hold them, therefore, to be supreme poets; and we place them in an order apart, although we recognise, within that order, various degrees of worth and power. To this order I do not think that Matthew Arnold belongs; and if I were asked for a reason, I should say it is mainly because he fails to interpret that large and most engrossing side of life which Dante interprets in his "Vita Nuova." And just because he fails there, his dramatic poems, although they contain fine things, are not dramatically great; they are failures too. This cannot be said of his narrative poems; they, in their manner, are brilliantly successful. But what has been withheld from him in dramatic power has been abundantly bestowed in personal power, in strenuousness, concentration, lucidity; and therefore his lyrical poems are exceedingly great. His lucidity and concentration working upon his tender and emotional nature, and penetrated by his deep, his divine, feeling of "the sense of tears in mortal things," have made him greatest of all in his Elegies; his strong point is there; some of his elegies are masterpieces.

But I conceive that Matthew Arnold has a larger function than this, an higher sphere; his great style points to it, the distinction and potency of his work adapt him for it. Only the other day, it was on the 13th of February in this year, Matthew Arnold gave an address at Westminster, on

Milton; it was his last public discourse, and it was destined to be his first posthumous essay. He says: "In our race are thousands of readers, presently there will be millions, who know not a word of Greek and Latin, and will never learn those languages. If this host of readers are ever to gain any sense of the power and charm of the great poets of antiquity, their way to gain it is not through translations of the ancients, but through the original poetry of Milton, who has the like power and charm, because he has the like great style.

"Through Milton they may gain it, for, in conclusion, Milton is English; this master in the great style of the ancients is English. All the Anglo-Saxon contagion, all the flood of Anglo-Saxon commonness, beats vainly against the great style, but cannot shake it, and has to accept its triumph. But it triumphs in Milton, in one of our own race, tongue, faith, and morals. Milton has made the great style no longer an exotic here; he has made it an inmate amongst us, a leaven, and a power. Nevertheless, he and his hearers on both sides of the Atlantic are English, and will remain English:—

'*Sermonem Ausonii patrium moresque tenebunt.*'

The English race overspreads the world, and at the same time the ideal of an excellence the most high and the most rare abides with it for ever."

I make no comparison between Matthew Arnold and Milton; but these last words of his, about Milton, define what I conceive to be his larger function. No man who attains to the great style can fail to have a very distinguished function; and Matthew Arnold, like Milton, will be "a leaven and a power," because he, too, has made the great style current in English. With his passion for culture and perfection, there is no destiny he would prefer to this, for which his nature, his training, and his sympathies, all prepared him. To convey the message of the ancients whom he loved so well, in the English tongue which he was taught by them to use so divinely, to serve as an eternal protest against charlatanism and vulgarity, is exactly the mission he would have chosen for himself. But in this last speech

of his, he enunciates another truth, and we cannot dwell too much upon it. In literature, in the things of the mind, by which alone we truly live, political divisions do not count; whether we are subjects or citizens, Americans, Australians, British, does not matter, we are all equally English, all equally concerned in the purity and power of our common tongue. Since it is a world-wide tongue, its power is enormous; but for this very reason, its purity may be less secure. The few writers in it, therefore, who give us "an ideal of excellence the most high and the most rare," have an important function, and we should cling all the more closely to them; it should be a matter of passionate concern that these ideals abide with us for ever.

In the meantime, and as long as this generation of ours is in possession of the earth, as long as its ideas are current, Matthew Arnold will occupy an unique position; he, and he alone, can give us modern ideas in a classical form. For a reader who turns to him will find the problems of our modern life, the troubles of our modern spirit, treated in a noble and penetrating way, and in the great style. Such a reader will be calmed, consoled, braced; for Matthew Arnold "gives us so much to rest upon, so much which communicates his spirit and engages ours!"

"Yearn to the greatness of Nature;
Rally the good in the depths of thyself!"

Matthew Arnold says to us incessantly;

"On, to the bound of the waste,
On, to the city of God;"

he continually repeats.

More and more, as time goes on, the world will recognize that he says all this to it in the manner and style of the great masters; and his work will steadily take its true place above the prettinesses, the affectations, the eccentricities, which pass current on all sides of us now as great and genuine poetry. And, in the still, cool atmosphere of the future, his voice will be clearer and stronger than it sounds to us now, amid the heat and the noisy personalities of our contemporary strife. We who read him, and we who write about

him, will perish and pass away; but he will remain, disengaged from all that is low and temporary, as a source of strength and joy:—

> *"But the majestic river floated on,*
> *Out of the mist and hum of that low land,*
> *Into the frosty starlight, and there moved,*
> *Rejoicing."*

It is only when we turn from verse to prose that we feel the present significance of Matthew Arnold's loss. Now that he is gone, we are, all of us, ever so much more at the mercy of stupidity and imposture and vulgarity. Who is there left that can raise common sense above the commonplace? Who can move practical things into the sphere of ideas, and handle them with distinction, lightness, and simplicity? In prose his loss is irreparable, in prose it is most difficult to realize; for "he furnished to others so much of that which all live by," that he seemed gifted with immortal youth, and destined to criticise innumerable centuries with the same keenness and buoyancy which he infused into this century of ours. He gave us so much that we could live by, he understood so fully the life in which he moved, that his departure is like the visible passing away of the sanest manifestation of the soul and intellect of our generation. "Nullum fere scribendi genus non tetigit." It is in his prose that we see the versatility of his mind, and the width of his culture; but before we can appreciate his work in prose, we must try and realize what his aim was. He was a scholar, but not a pedant; he had no vain delusions about founding a school of thought, giving final opinions about things, establishing a system of criticism. Every one of these projects he abhorred, as detrimental to all fruitful thought, as the very delirium of mischievous vanity. "The old recipe, to think a little more and bustle a little less, seems to me still the best recipe to follow. So I take comfort when I find the 'Guardian' reproaching me with having no influence; for I know what influence means,—a party, practical proposals, action; and I say to myself: 'Even supposing I could get some followers, and assemble them, brimming with affectionate enthusiasm, in a committee-room at some inn; what on earth should I say to them? what

resolutions could I propose? I could only propose the old Socratice commonplace, *know thyself;* and how black they would all look at that!'" And so when I hear him reproached because his writing, so people of a certain temper think, was not vigorous, or because his opinions were wanting in certainty; I reply, 'no doubt it is as you say, but only raw and semi-educated people, like some clergymen and many press-writers, are gifted with perfect certainty and undaunted vigour: they will always rush in where angels fear to tread.' Matthew Arnold's attitude was rather "to try and approach truth on one side after another, not to strive or cry, not to persist in pressing forward, on any side, with violence and self-will,—it is only thus, it seems to me," he says, "that mortals may hope to gain any vision of the mysterious Goddess, whom we shall never see except in outline, and only thus even in outline. He who will do nothing but fight impetuously towards her on his own, one, favourite, particular line, is inevitably destined to run his head into the folds of the black robe in which she is wrapped." And so critics, with their heads enveloped in that robe, have told us over and over again that "his politics were unpractical." An excellent writer and a fine man, who is still wise and estimable although he has been a Cabinet Minister, confessed not long ago that "Politics were a continual acceptance of the second best;" and in saying this he perhaps unduly flattered the achievements of our politicians. But that saying accounts for Matthew Arnold's attitude towards politics; it was his mission, he conceived, to indicate not what was brutally practical, what was most convenient, it may be, to party managers, but what was ideally the best. "He brings thought to bear upon politics," as he says himself, of Burke, "he saturates politics with thought. I know nothing more striking, and I must add that I know nothing more un-English;" and nothing which makes press-writers and politicians more uncomfortable.

It was Matthew Arnold's fate to make many people, and many classes of people, angry and uncomfortable; he made them, as Dante expresses it, "Guatar l'un l'altro, come al ver si guata," he made them look at one another as men look when the truth is told them. He also made them feel towards him as men too often feel towards the revealer of plain

but disturbing and uncomfortable truths. Instead of feeling sorry for themselves at being wrong, they fly into a rage with the person who points out their evil plight; it is very human, but none the less foolish, and at least as old as the time of Socrates. As the damned spirits whom Dante mentions looked and felt towards him, so have the theologians, perhaps more often than any other class, looked and felt towards Matthew Arnold; with how much justice, I will not presume to decide. But Matthew Arnold says very truly "the most characteristic thoughts one can quote from any writer are always his thoughts on matters of religion." And if we leave the theologians and the damned to stare at one another, and turn ourselves to look simply at what Matthew Arnold says on these matters, we shall find many noble, and penetrating, and beautiful things; if we are wise, we shall take thankfully those we can accept, and not join the scowling company because of the rest.

After all, there are few modern writers from whom one can get more than from Matthew Arnold; provided one realizes exactly what it is he has to give. He does not profess to give, I repeat, final opinions, or fixed systems, or dogmatic utterances. But he places things in the light of a clear and lucid intellect, he saturates them with thought, and brings a fresh current of ideas to bear upon them. He bids his readers examine their ingrained notions, and scrutinize their prejudices, and look at things as they really are, and judge them by a high standard of taste, culture, and intelligence. His influence is one of the finest of intellectual disciplines, simply because he does not set up for being a master; he gives his readers, not rules, but flexibility of mind and keenness of perception. About one thing only is he inflexible; he will accept no standard but the highest and noblest, nothing less will satisfy him, and no appearance of the best, however popular, powerful, or imposing, ever deludes him. And this lofty tone has brought him numerous enemies. Just as men get angry when their faults are pointed out, and hate not their errors but their monitor; so, when their low ideals and false tastes are exposed, they call their critic fastidious. Or they write a criticism on Matthew Arnold, and say that they find in him "so great a measure of delicate intellectual subtlety, that the atmos-

phere is generally more or less uncongenial." Very likely! for Matthew Arnold reveals everywhere that quality which is uncongenial to all that is common, Distinction. "Of this quality the world is impatient; it chafes against it, rails at it, insults it, hates it;—it ends by receiving its influence and undergoing its law. This quality at last inexorably corrects the world's blunders, and fixes the world's ideals. It procures that the popular poet shall not finally pass for a Pindar, nor the popular historian for a Tacitus, nor the popular preacher for a Bossuet."

I have already exceeded my limits, and I can only touch in the briefest way upon Matthew Arnold's work in prose; if these pages are ever open to me again, I should like to discuss his prose at greater length: and how much can be said about prose, now that we have so many rich and luxuriant masters of it flourishing on all sides of us! I can only say, then, that Matthew Arnold, in the manner and style of his prose, gives us the same example as in his verse; the example of the plain, simple, unpretentious style of the great masters of true prose. That which in verse is known as "the beautiful cameo of description," is known in prose as "the prose-poem." "Qu'est ce qu'un poème en prose," asks Voltaire, "sinon un aveu de son impuissance?" "What is a prose-poem, but a thing which testifies to its own and to its author's impotence?" I should reply, 'it certainly testifies to these; but it proclaims no less that its author is ignorant of what prose should be.' This age of ours makes many claims upon us, but none so unreasonable as when it bids us accept its mystifications for marvels, its tentative experiments for classical models, its experimental guesses for final truths; and so these healthy breezes of common sense from the eighteenth century are most invigorating for us now and then.

"Let us not bewilder our successors," says Matthew Arnold, in conclusion; "let us transmit to them the practice of poetry [and of prose] with its boundaries and wholesome regulative laws, under which excellent works may again, perhaps, at some future time, be produced, not fallen into oblivion through our neglect, not yet condemned and cancelled by the influence of their eternal enemy, caprice. Sanity,—that is the great virtue of the ancient literature;

the want of it is the great defect of the modern, in spite of all its variety and power." "Docile echoes of the eternal voice," he would say of the great masters in literature, "pliant organs of the infinite will, such workers are going along with the essential movement of the world." I always think that Matthew Arnold, as a prose writer, would wish the future to speak of him as one of the small band of workers who, in his own time and place, "echoed the eternal voice." He would best like to be known as a "pliant organ of the infinite will." That, it seems to me, was above all other things his aim in prose.

His aim in life, as he said not long ago, was "to be helpful to others," to be sympathetic. And the affection of those amongst whom he laboured testifies to the noble and loving way in which he fulfilled that aim during the long course of uncongenial employments in which he was condemned, by a hard fate and a harder generation, to wear away the precious years of his maturity. Those who knew him will not soon forget the charm of that gracious presence, the magnetic happiness which radiated from that buoyant yet gentle spirit. The fifteenth of April will come and go many times before it ceases to dawn upon a group of mourners who are inconsolable.

"Yet can I not persuade me thou art dead,
Or that thy corse corrupts in earth's dark womb,
Or that thy beauties lie in wormy bed,
Hid from the world in a low-delvèd tomb;
Could Heaven, for pity, thee so strictly doom?
Oh no! for something in thy face did shine
Above mortality, that showed thou wast divine."

ARTHUR GALTON.

FACSIMILES OF THREE OF THE
ILLUSTRATIONS BY W. BLAKE
TO THE PASTORALS OF VIRGIL.

A BRIEF NOTE UPON "THE WINTER'S TALE."

It was long a matter I could not reconcile with my own mind, that the last, for so it would seem, of the plays written entirely by Shakespeare, the play following "The Tempest," that most faultless of all the master's efforts, should lay itself open to such criticism as Schlegel's when he says, it divides itself in some degree into two plays; for what is this objection but the most radical that can be urged against a work of art, an absence of unity?

Even if we except those few confessedly unactable plays of Shakespeare, it is not always that we would choose to see a drama of his upon the stage. But "The Winter's Tale" is not one, I think, which we care only to read. Read through by itself, those many breaks and lapses of time assuredly seem to disjoint it; and it was not until I saw this comedy acted some little while ago, that I altogether realized what now appears to me the method employed in its construction, by which the old limits of time, place, and action, are to a certain extent replaced by a studied unity of temper, of intention, and of ideas. Indeed the very carelessness of the play, carelessness, it is true, which only a master bent on high things can beget, when set against the fine equality of "The Tempest," almost suggests the thought that Shakespeare himself felt that the story of "The Winter's Tale" rendered it a play for acting; whereas in the other play, with its Ariel and its Miranda, he had divined that men would come to read it, sooner than rest content with any bodily presentment of ideas so transcendent, and bestowed therefore upon it the ultimate touch.

It was, as I have said, in the acting, in the gradual unfolding of the story, part by part, that the true sequence of the piece seemed to suggest itself; and by approaching the play rather as one, now for the first time come to see it performed, and as yet unhampered by any prejudice. I felt more and more as the play proceeded, that Shakespeare did not merely call it "The Winter's Tale" because it is "a wild story, calculated to interest a circle round a fireside," but rather because it is a tale "of sprites and goblins," of unlaid

fancies of the mind; the tale, that is, which Mamillius would have whispered to his mother in the beginning of the second act: for it is in this little incident that I find the whole method of the play foreshadowed. But bear with me a little, and you shall have my meaning to the full.

Let us turn to the passage between Hermione and her child:

HER. *What wisdom stirs amongst you?*
Come, sir, now
I am for you again: pray you, sit by us,
And tell's a tale.
MAM. *Merry or sad shall't be?*
HER. *As merry as you will.*
MAM. *A sad tale's best for winter: I have one*
Of sprites and goblins.
HER. *Let's have that, good sir.*
Come on, sit down: come on, and do your best
To fright me with your sprites; you're powerful at it.
MAM. *There was a man—*
HER. *Nay, come, sit down; then on.*
MAM. *Dwelt by a churchyard: I will tell it softly*
Yond crickets shall not hear it.
HER. *Come on, then,*
And give't me in mine ear.

Thus are we prevented from hearing the story we looked to have heard; the sad tale, which is best for winter, is suddenly broken off, and we know not what came of this dwelling by a churchyard. But the dominant of the piece has been struck, and before we are aware, Leontes, his blind jealousy eyed with falsehood and driving him to very madness, snatches the child from its mother, and hurries Hermione to prison. This rude and sudden intrusion sharply enough emphasizes the unlooked-for ending of Mamillius' story; and as with the story, we are in possession of nothing by which we can divine how this tale of "sprites and goblins" of Leontes' heart will fall out. It is the first of those vivid changes of colour that are to follow one upon another, until the story of the play lies before us, like the expanse of the Weald seen from the Kentish hills, on an April morning, when deep shadows interchanged with great breadths of sunlight fly over the land; and rains, and brilliant hues, and the pallor of the shade, rapidly alternate.

Already with the second scene of the second act, the clas-

sical limits of time have been exceeded; and at the close of this act, we are told that twenty-three days have gone by, since Leontes had sent Cleomines and Dion to the oracle at Delphos, that the truth about this matter of his wife might appear. But mark how these breaks of time come as a fore-warning of those severer breaks, in the next act, that shall disjoint, as it were, the outward sequence of the piece. I mean the sharp news of the death of Mamillius, so hastily followed by those over-passionate tears of Paulina for the dead Hermione. The thread of the story would seem to be snapped; and this apparent breaking up of all possible issues insisted upon, by the remainder of the act merely presenting what we had already heard commanded by the king, and what we might well have supposed had before been enacted. Nothing appears left to Leontes but to seek out the chapel where his wife and child lie, and shed tears there. "So long as nature will bear up with this exercise," he will use it, for there is no other way. And we remember the story of the man who dwelt by a churchyard, the story which was withheld from us, and committed only to the ear of Hermione.

That objection of Coleridge's, that it seemed "a mere indolence of the great bard not to have provided in the oracular response some ground for Hermione's seeming death and fifteen years' voluntary concealment," cannot hold, if I rightly divine the motive of the master: for had he done so, he would have destroyed the sense he gives us, that in this play we have indeed stumbled upon the mystery of life, that the instant hour alone we can know certainly; hitherto we may come and no farther, but must needs abide to the end, walled in by the inscrutable hereafter.

Again comes the blank, the lapsed period, and with Time as Chorus, the wide gap of sixteen years is passed over. The melancholy reiteration of the sorrows that have gone by, in the opening scene between Polixenes and Camillo, makes but the more intense the vividness of the change which at once comes over the play, a change so entire as to leave nothing of former things. The shearing feast, with its country-folk and its music; Autolycus, delightful with his rogueries and his songs; the dance of the Satyrs; and, above

all, Perdita with her flowers; how fresh, how enchanting! Now are we, indeed, come into a different world from that of the first three acts; and we are conscious moreover that the master is employing a method very different from the accustomed classical method, with its severe unities. For the moment, we are almost willing to think that he has exchanged the method of art, with its order and its selection, for the hazard of life, with its chaos and its bewildering variety: and how like Life the play is, Life with its blind future, and ever-present sense of the inexorable destinies.

But to insist upon the change of things is the temper of the play, and so the loves of Perdita and Florizel are broken into, even as the more heroic love of Hermione was. In the device of Camillo to bring all to Sicilia, ending with the announcement that Polixenes himself treads hard upon the heels of the fugitives, we might be led to suppose that in some vicissitude of this newer love the comedy would find its ending. But what, in the whole play, strikes most strangely, is that this incident should be all at once passed over in a by-scene between Autolycus and some gentlemen of the court, who, after relating the discovery of the lost daughter of Hermione and Leontes in Perdita, and of the consequent reconciliation of her and Forizel to Polixenes, suddenly centre the interest upon an incident apparently trivial, and altogether unlooked for, the approaching display of the statue which Paulina has had cut of Hermione, "and now newly performed by that rare Italian master, Julio Romano." And with this sudden conclusion of all immediate issues, with this last and most unlooked-for of changes, the closing scene of the play opens.

And what is the extreme issue that we await? for in his art has the master touched upon all life, and now, in the last entire play he shall write, than this he has nothing worthier to show us. Already has Leontes heavily reproached himself, "All mine own folly," he has acknowledged; and now with the mystery of the awakening music, the truth comes upon him, that through no folly of his can be moved the fixed purpose of the Gods above. In the touch of the outstretched hand of Hermione, and in his cry "Oh, she's warm!" whatever in the play has been crooked, or wounded, or dissevered, is suddenly made straight, and healed, and

gathered together; and all this tangle of vicissitudes immediately transformed, and, as it were, by the fire of the moment, cast like molten metal into one complete and unblemished form. At last has it been shown him that despite all the blindness, the uncertainty of the past, whatever desirable in life is his, comes of the repeated bounty of the Gods, for of himself, he had cast it from him. And does it not dawn upon us, growing older, as upon Leontes, that much of this life of our's is a winter's tale, a tale of pain and grief that we ourselves have made, a tale of "sprites and goblins," of unlaid fancies of the mind upon which we have blindly wrecked so much of our happiness? HERBERT P. HORNE.

IN A CATHEDRAL.

Up in the roof the carver wrought,
Creating many a lovely thing;
His hand's true service shaped his thought;
He toiled to please no mortal king,
But the dear Christ whose image dim
Gazed from the tall rood under him.

Patiently, oh! patiently,
His flowers unfolded from the wood,
His fruit grew on the long-dead tree,
His elves took life, a sportive brood;
He fashioned many a singing-bird
Whose lovely silence praised the Lord.

He made a row of vines in fruit
And peaches on a Southern wall,
And here a sad and stringless lute
With dulcimers unmusical;
And roses red, and lilies white,
And stars that lit no heaven at night.

His woodland creatures gazed at you
Out from old boughs with lichen sere,
And flying birds, that never flew,
Soared in the Summer dusk up here
Where a young angel prayed and smiled,
For all his wings a human child.

The patient carver toiled apart,
The world roared on,—a world away;
No earthly ties were round his heart,
No passion stirred his quiet day:
His carvings in the cloister dim,
Made home, and wife, and child to him.

He was so young when he began;
A fair-haired boy whose wistful eyes
Saw earth and heaven, and scarcely man,
But weighed large issues and were wise:

The years that all unheeded sped,
Shook their grey dusts upon his head.

And when this wilderness of shade,
Far from men's eyes, made God's heart glad,
He woke from dreams, and undismayed
Knew he was old, and cold, and sad,
He kissed his nerveless good right hand,
And died,—his name was writ in sand.

In a far city whose walls are gold,
His hand regains its youth and strength;
His dreams more fair a hundred-fold
Meet him who gives them form at length:
Through pillared aisles of pearl and rose,
Heart-joyed the dreaming carver goes.

God's artists make His palace fair;
Where the vast arches glimmer and gleam,
My carver shapes with happy care
The lovely visions of his dream;
And earns perhaps for fullest meed
God's praise,—"the work is good indeed!"

KATHARINE TYNAN.

A NOTE ON A PAMPHLET ENTITLED, "THE NATURALISTIC SCHOOL OF PAINTING," BY FRANCIS BATE.

In April last the New English Art Club opened their third Exhibition in the Dudley Gallery, Piccadilly. It was, assuredly, a noticeable Exhibition: if you went to it with a fairly unprejudiced mind, you were set thinking, wondering, reconsidering perhaps some important conclusions of your artistic belief: and that is an effect, which it is not given to all our Exhibitions to exercise on us. The members of the New English Art Club are for the most part young men, trained in the technically wonderful schools of France; and they are young men enthusiastically militant against conservative traditions in Art, militant especially against our English conservative traditions. It is only natural, therefore, that their Exhibition at the Dudley Gallery should have been emphasized by some of the characteristics of youth, and of youth passing through a stage of rebellion. It is not, necessarily, any very serious blame to say, that there was about it some crudity, exaggeration, perhaps here and there just a tinge of impertinence. These things we should look for in the nature of the case: and there were certainly to balance them a good deal of individuality in many of the pictures, an absence of conventionalism alike in their subjects and in the treatment of them, a sense that the men had been painting what they genuinely cared to paint, a very excellent technical skill.

No one, therefore, who is seriously and widely interested in the affairs of English Art, can fail to be interested in the New English Art Club, or to be other than anxious to understand, what it is precisely at which this younger generation of artists aims, what are the convictions about Art, over which they seem to be with such singular enthusiasm concerned.

Well, the secretary of the club, during this recent Exhibition, was Mr. Francis Bate: and I have had put into my hands a Pamphlet written by Mr. Bate, entitled, "The Naturalistic School of Painting;" a Pamphlet of ninety-seven pages, carefully written, and published, originally, in

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December, 1886, but already in 1887 passed on into its second edition. It is not, therefore, assuming too much perhaps, if one takes this Pamphlet as on the whole representative of the ideas held by the members of the New English Art Club, although it is not, of course, officially sanctioned by them. If I am wrong in assuming this, I here make my frank apology to the Club.

And whether I am right so far, or am wrong, to Mr. Bate himself I feel that I must at once, and to start with, apologize, for undertaking a criticism of his pamphlet, which by the inexorable conditions of this present number of the Hobby Horse may by no means extend over more than five pages. Mr. Bates has written with earnestness and ability in his Pamphlet on many of the most fundamental and subtle questions connected with Art: and both from the nature of these questions, and from the manner in which he has treated them, it is at first glance something like an impertinence for anyone to set himself on criticising, what Mr. Bate says, in so limited a space. This I frankly admit: yet having admitted it, anyone who chances to read these pages will understand, I hope, that they by no means aim at dealing with Mr. Bate's Pamphlet, as it deserves being dealt with: but only at extracting from it, what seems to be Mr. Bate's idea upon one fundamental point, the relation, I mean, between Art and Nature; a question, certainly, about which one hears much talk, for the most part sentimental and vague; yet which lies at the very root of artistic ideas and methods; which is the most radical, perhaps, of all radical questions, that in talking over what Art is anyone can ever put to us. Here then is the limitation of my article, and the justification for it.

Now upon this radical matter Mr. Bate writes clearly enough. Our best method, therefore, will be to collect from his Pamphlet a few quotations, which are concerned with it. I will certainly try to give these quotations as fairly as I know how: and they will be well worth the trouble of collecting and thinking over, not only because they are a lucid expression of what an able, individual artist seriously holds, but of what a remarkable group of artists holds; men, who have on their side youth, enthusiasm, a dexterous technical skill; and with whom, therefore, the future of our

English Art may not unreasonably be supposed in some considerable measure to lie. What it is, then, that these men think the Art of Painting is, we shall do wisely to learn.

On page 18 of his Pamphlet Mr. Bate defines this "New School" as that, which "professes to study Nature, to accept her guidance—and hers only—to recognize, only in what she teaches, the canons of Art." He distinguishes it, therefore, as "professing Truth to Nature, looking to Nature for inspiration and encouragement," by the title of "The Naturalistic School."

We go on to read, at page 27, that "it is undoubtedly true that the first impression of a good picture must, as nearly as possible, be as the first impression of Nature:" "all," we find further on, "must be subordinate to the integrity of the first impression;" and the first impression must be one of Light. "The province of the painter's art," then, "is first to reflect Nature, to transcribe it upon canvas, or what not, accurately." For "the painters of the Naturalistic School not only hold that in the accurate representation of Nature is represented also all the beauty and poetry of Art, but consider, that without such actual and truthful representation, the highest form of beauty is lost, and the poetry remaining can be only such as is contained in the symbolical. These painters further maintain that accurate representation rests upon the truthfulness of the impression:" and "the truth of the impression depends chiefly upon the correct rendering of light, and colour, and atmosphere, and in some measure of form." So "truth," says Mr. Bate, "absolute truth to Nature, is the great rule for the painting of every picture—truth to the *appearance* of things." And thus again, "our pictures should be accurate reflections of the *appearance* of Nature, not copies of a part of it, but reflections of the appearance of the whole of it." And at page 82 we read, "it is not for style to be daubed over a canvas, but for Nature to be reflected from it." And finally, on pages 91, 92, and 94, it is stated, that "Art, and especially pictorial art, is a means for expressing our delight in natural beauties already existing. It is only an accurate reflection of natural appearances that we have been interested in or delighted with." The artist is not a creator, at least "he has created nothing but the reflection:" so that "a picture

cannot be much more than the artist's expression of joy in things that are, a boisterously exuberant or self-contained assertion of his pleasure in the beauties of them, an open invitation for his fellows to enjoy them also."

Now here we have a tolerably long chain of quotations drawn, fairly enough, I hope, from the opening to the closing pages of Mr. Bate's Pamphlet. I think the impression which they leave upon us of what his doctrine is as to the relation of Nature and Art is a clear impression. But to prevent any chance of confusion, to have a lucid, simple sentence before us as the expression of his faith, into which all he writes through these ninety-seven pages gathers itself, let us take what Mr. Bate, finally as it were, tells us on page 92: "Art is only an accurate reflection of natural appearances." This, then, is the creed of the Naturalistic School, of the New English Art Club, of a vigorous, increasing group of our younger men, full of cleverness, and with our future in some measure in their hands. "Art is *only* an accurate reflection of natural appearances." I have ventured to italicize the word "only." It is clearly of the utmost importance here. Art is this, and nothing more than this, "an accurate reflection of natural appearances."

To me, personally, I confess, that seems precisely what Art is not. There is one other thing besides Nature with which Art is constantly, and properly, brought into comparison, I mean of course Science. Now the object of Science is to discover, and present us with, the facts of Nature, the facts of Nature as they are in themselves, unaffected by human imagination or feeling. When then Art is defined for us as "*only* an accurate reflection of natural appearances," it is something much more like a definition of Science that we are called upon to accept, than a definition of Art: for the appearances of Nature are really not less facts than are the actual objects of Nature, though facts no doubt of a different order. But the essential idea of Art is the idea of something, which has its rise and energy in the imagination and feeling of human beings: its radical distinction from Nature and from Science being precisely this, that it has to do with the expression of what is human in the world, that it is the expression of human imagination

and feeling, as these deal with the experiences of life. Mr. Bate, in the Pamphlet we are busied over, is speaking only of one particular branch of Art, namely Pictorial Art: but if what I am saying is true at all, it is, obviously, true of Painting just as thoroughly as of any other form of artistic expression: to render a painting, that is to say, perfectly a work of Art, it is necessary that it should be the product of a man's imaginative and emotional faculties working out their pleasure amid the experiences supplied to them by Nature; not in the least only reflecting these experiences, as Mr. Bate would teach us, but creating out of these experiences a world of their own, the degree of whose coincidence with the actual appearances of the Natural world is to depend on the man's choice, guided by an instinct for what is sufficient to carry his meaning. Regarded, therefore, from this point of view Nature is thought of in her relation to Art not at all as something of which, so far as the artist is concerned, the only end is to get "an accurate reflection of its appearances;" but as something which supplies Art with a store-house, so to say, of raw-material, of symbols, from which she may by selection and creative combinations give expression to her own imaginative and emotional experiences.

I need scarcely remind the reader of this short article, that I have not attempted to do more in it, than to set over against one another, somewhat crudely perhaps, two theories of what Art is, which are distinct and contradictory. There is no opportunity at the moment of insisting on the reasons, which should make a person incline to the one theory rather than to the other: or of going into any of the numerous and subtle questions, which inevitably arise the moment we try to work either theory practically out. It may be of some use, however, to have the two brought here plainly face to face, and so left for the present with no more words than are necessary for the bare statement of them. SELWYN IMAGE.

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